Michigan Environmental Council and the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council

MEC has been working for 25 years to help leaders revise and update our state's planning laws to help our communities better address growth pressure and environmental needs. Long before the Leadership Council was created we worked with our 70 member groups and other land use, local government and advocacy organizations across the state to develop recommendations that will help bring more consistency and predictability to the process of land use decision-making.

State-level leadership, more coordinated planning on a regional level, and more tools for local governments: These were priorities for MEC in our work on the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council (MLULC), and we continue to support most of the group's stated goals.

Ten MLULC initiatives to support in the 2005-2006 Legislative Session:

1. **Commerce centers (as proposed in MLULC).** We support the state recognizing certain communities as "commerce centers" and targeting its resources to support redevelopment and growth within these existing commerce centers. The MLULC says commerce centers should be defined based on their (1) relative population density, and (2) the availability of existing public infrastructure required to support development. However, the current proposed definition (Rep. Allen) does not use these definitions. Chapter 4, #5.

2. **Land Division Act reform.** MEC supports the MLULC's recommendation of a "comprehensive review of the Land Division Act" that will eliminate 10-year splits and reduce non-platted splits in order to encourage more compact development. We support Sen. Birkholz's continued efforts in this regard, and the sunset in SB 219. Chapter 5, #16

3. **Agricultural Production Areas**. MEC supports the Council's recommendations to create "Agricultural Production Areas" and are strongly in support of initiatives that support value-added agriculture, reduce pressure on farmland, and protect critical areas such as the fruit belt and cherry ridge. However, current legislation introduced to create Agricultural Production Districts (HB 4257 of 2005, formerly HB 5030 of 2004) is too costly and does not provide for permanent preservation, meaningful recapture fees, or tools beyond those already available in the popular PA 116 programs. Legislative services have estimated that the proposal would reduce State General Fund revenue by between $31.9 million and $95.1 million, depending on how widely the program is used. For the high price, much more could be done to support existing PA 116 or fund current PDR programs, demand for which far outstrips existing funding. Chapter 5, #3, 4 and 5.

4. **Redevelopment readiness standards.** MEC agrees the state should define, in consultation with the private sector and local communities, a set of redevelopment readiness standards by which local governments may measure and promote their ability

to compete for private redevelopment investment and state technical and financial assistance. Chapter 4, #2b.

5. **Flexible road design standards and a Fix It First approach to transportation funding**. MEC supports the MLULC's recommendation that the state should support modern, cost-efficient, multimodal transportation systems to assure that our urban areas are accessible, attractive and efficient for people of all ages, incomes, and physical abilities. The state should authorize and strongly encourage the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), county road commissions, and local communities to use alternative road design standards where safe and appropriate. Chapter 4, #6; Chapter 6, #9a-b.

6. **Local land use education and training.** MEC supports more training, education, and knowledge for local planning and zoning officials and to local elected officials, and believes that state incentives should be used to encourage this activity. MLULC says that by 2010, more than 60 percent of all appointed planning and zoning officials and local elected officials in a single jurisdiction should be encouraged to participate in basic land use planning program. Chapter 6, #1a

7. **New tools for local governments**. The MLULC recommended a negotiated balance of preservation and density-enhancement programs that should handled as a package. Tools to foster more compact development include density-based and mixed use zoning. If coupled with urban service boundaries and requirements for adequate infrastructure (i.e., concurrency), these tools will help communities reduce overall land consumption by focusing on regional needs rather than minimum lot sizes. Chapter 6, #25.

8. **School siting requirements**. MEC supports legislation that requires school districts to comply with master plans and infrastructure capital construction plans adopted by local government, and therefore support Sen. Garcia's SB 100 for public schools to adhere to local zoning ordinances. Chapter 4, #1c.

9. **Incentives for regional cooperation.** Joint planning has been enabled, but the MLULC also recommends the state create incentives for regional cooperation using state and federal funding for certain activities such as infrastructure with multijurisdictional impacts, for regional plans, and for other initiatives to deal with issues of greater than local concern. Chapter 6, #21a.

10. **Protection of coastal and headwater areas.** The MLULC recommends financial assistance to local units of government or nonprofit conservation organizations for the acquisition of land or rights in land that preserve critical headwaters areas; and also should assure that headwaters on public lands are managed to protect water quality. Additionally, "the state should establish statewide policies that **prioritize shoreline protection** .These policies should be implemented through the appropriate multijurisdictional or local planning commissions." Chapter 5, #15 and #12.

Defining Bottom Lines: What's needed to protect public health in Michigan?

James Clift
Michigan Environmental Council
March 17, 2005

Mother's milk --

Babies' nourishment should be free of contaminants

- In 6 months of breast-feeding, about 20% of the pollutants in the mothers' body fat transfer to their babies.
- Through breast-feeding, typical U.S. babies ingest the maximum recommended lifetime dose of dioxin, and 5 times the allowable daily adult intake of PCBs
- One of every 10 women in the U.S. has mercury levels high enough to impact a developing fetus.

Mother's Milk

- For optimum nutrition, protection against infections, and better overall development, pediatricians agree that the best food for babies is breast milk.
- Therefore, your only choice is to institute policies that reduce the contaminant levels in mother's milk.

Public Health Trends

- Brain cancers and other tumors in kids' nervous systems rose by more than 25% between 1973 and 1996.
- The number of U.S. kids in special education increased 191% between 1977 and 1994.

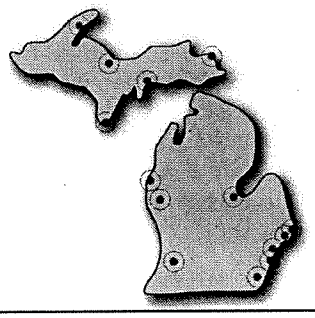
Pathways of Exposure

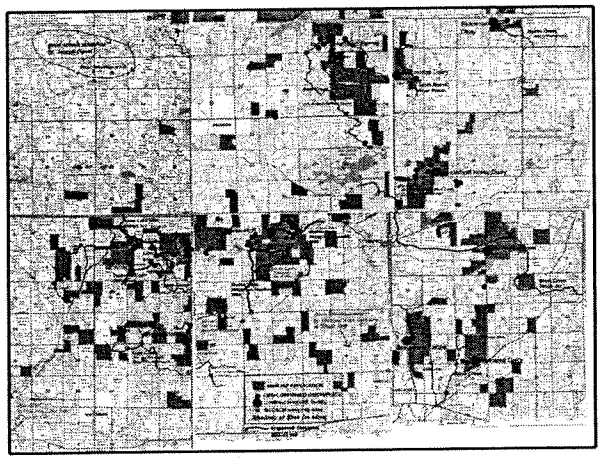
- Unhealthy air
- Impaired waters
- Direct contact with contaminated property

Unhealthy Air

- Power plant pollution shortens the lives of 24,000 people annually (an estimated 980 in Michigan). Lives are shortened by an average of 14 years.
- Childhood asthma in the U.S. has doubled in the last 20 years.
- An estimated 213,600 kids and 654,000 adults in Michigan have asthma – 160 deaths a year directly related to asthma

Michigan's Water - Areas of Concern





Cleaning up our Toxic Legacy

- Leaking Underground Storage Tanks
- 9,000 known releases – about 3,000 being addressed today
- In order to protect drinking water in Michigan, it will cost an estimated $1.7 billion dollars to address orphan sites

Cleaning up our Toxic Legacy

- Over 8,000 other contaminated sites – thousands in need of work
- No money for cleaning up any new sites of contamination
- Not enough money to address the current sites
- Not enough money to support MDEQ staff by the end of FY 2006

What you can do

- More attention to pollution prevention
- New funding sources needed to clean up contaminated sites
- Clean up our aging coal-fired power plants
- Better monitor water quality
- Adopt Smart Growth policies

Impacts of our Land Use decisions

- **Environmental:**
  - Air and water pollution
    - Highest % of water pollution in MI is "non-point source" (e.g. stormwater runoff)
    - Increased air pollution (e.g. auto-dependent communities, commutes)
  - Neglected urban contamination
    - Over 8,000 contaminated sites in MI, approximately 3,000 in Detroit alone
    - State spending does not focus on aging infrastructure (e.g. sewers, roads)

Impacts of our Land Use decisions

- **Economic:**
  - Redundant infrastructure spending
    - Closed 278 schools since 1996 while building 500 new ones
    - According to MDOT 20% of Michigan roads have a life expectancy of 0 years; 57% have a life expectancy of 0-7 years
  - Transportation costs
    - 100 billion miles driven each year in MI
    - Up 25% in ten years, four times faster than state population

Impacts of our Land Use decisions

- **Social:**
  - Concentrated poverty, pollution
  - Loss of farmland, rural economy
    - 300,000 acres lost since 1993
    - 1.5 million more projected by 2040
  - Segregation
    - According to the 2000 Census, Michigan is the most segregated state in the nation
  - Congestion
    - Michigan drivers and passengers spent the equivalent of 8 days per year in their car

MEC's Role in the MLULC

- MEC's President Lana Pollack was a member of the Council
- Partnered with Realtors and Roadbuilders on Research and Advocacy
- Worked with Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, NAACP and Realtors on Land Use Outreach

MEC's Smart Growth Agenda

Core land use polices

Derived from member groups, land-use organizations and the public

- Fix-it-First policy
- State-level goals and Priority Funding approach
- Coordinated regional planning
- Urban redevelopment
- Transportation and transit choices
- Farmland Protection and value-added agricultural

Fix-it-First for infrastructure

MLULC Recommendations:

- "State and federal infrastructure funding should be prioritized to support existing developed areas" (Chapter 7, #1)
- "Local jurisdictions should develop, adopt, and regularly update local capital improvement plans" (Chapter 7, #3c)

State-level goals and priority funding

MLULC Recommendations:

- "The state should establish broad-based, visionary land use goals for Michigan" (Chapter 6, #12)
- "The state should provide incentives for innovative local and multijurisdictional planning and zoning efforts" (Chapter 6, #13)

Urban redevelopment

MLULC Recommendations:

- "Adopting legislation that requires school districts to comply with master plans and infrastructure capital construction plans" (Chapter 4, #1b)
- "The state should, in concert with local government, coordinate and review proposals to ensure that they effectively promote new private investment and reinvestment in urbanized areas" (Chapter 4, #2)

Transportation and transit choices

MLULC Recommendations:

- "Communities should provide nonmotorized, public transportation alternatives, safe routes to schools" (Chapter 7, #2c)
- "The state should support modern, cost-efficient, multimodal transportation systems to assure that our urban areas are accessible, attractive and efficient for people of all ages, incomes and physical abilities" (Chapter 4, #6)

Farmland protection and value-added agricultural

MLULC Recommendations:

- Agricultural Production Areas (Chapter 5, #3)
- "The state should continue support existing incentive-driven, value-added programs that protect the environment, increase the profitability of farmers, and thus preserve farmland" (Chapter 5, #6)
- "The (PDR) program is in need of a dedicated and consistent funding source beyond that currently provided ender PA 116" (Chapter 5, #4)

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Where we stand on the issues

In Michigan, people stand up for the environment

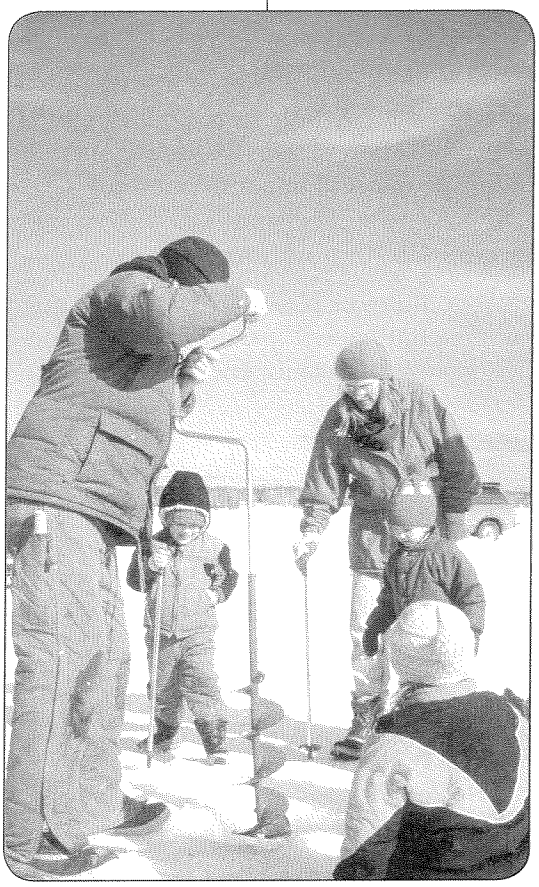
Past elections, polls and surveys show that environmental issues turn elections, drive ballot initiatives, and motivate citizens to hold lawmakers accountable.

Michigan residents understand the environment to be more than places to recreate. It is the air you breathe, the water you drink, the land you grow food on, and the neighborhood you live in. These key systems must be protected, as they sustain our Great Lakes State's people and economy.

The *2005-2006 Michigan Environmental Briefing Book* is a great tool for the public, lawmakers, and reporters. We list the most urgent public health and natural resource problems facing Michigan. We share causes, real solutions, and issue experts. Our proposed policy changes can help you achieve poison-free communities, make wise investments, and protect Michigan's heritage.

Achieve Toxic-Free Communities

We all deserve a clean, safe, and healthy environment for ourselves and our children—water you can drink and air you can breathe. Polluters should take responsibility for their actions by cleaning-up the poisons and paying for the damage they cause. When all of our residents have equal access to clean air and clean water, we will have a stronger Michigan.



The decisions made today in our communities and in the state capitol not only impact us, but future generations of Michiganians.

Make Wise Investments

We all understand that paying our taxes is a fair investment. These taxes benefit everyone through education, healthy workers, and clean air and water. In return, taxpayers deserve an open, efficient, and fair government that makes smart investments in our future. When all of our state and local officials insist on wise investments that protect the vitality of our communities, we will have a stronger Michigan.

Protect Michigan's Heritage

We value the long legacy of environmental and conservation leadership in our Great Lakes State. We believe that our elected officials should be proactive in the fight to safeguard our water, air, and land. When our communities and state government join hands in their efforts to secure our Great Lakes heritage, we will have a stronger Michigan.

Your voice, your vote, your power

We are at a critical period in Michigan's environmental history. The decisions made today in our communities and in the state capitol not only impact us, but future generations of Michiganians.

Today, we are asking all of you to take a stand with us. Use your voices and your votes to insist on poison-free communities, wise investments, and protection of your heritage. Together, we can build a better future and stronger Michigan.

Find what you're looking for

Please note that the views expressed on a particular issue are not necessarily shared by all Michigan Environmental Council member groups or other participating organizations.

Achieving Toxic-Free Communities

Eliminate Harmful Chemicals

Find out how toxic chemicals poison Michigan families and damage our kids. We can keep these chemicals out of our air and water—permanently.

Uphold Environmental Justice

People of color unfairly live with more pollution in Michigan. We need equal application of state laws and policies that protect the health of our people and our communities.

Reduce Mercury Contamination

Michigan's coal-fired power plants are poisoning our air, water, and people. We need to update our energy system. This will protect people from mercury and help Michigan become more energy efficient.

Making Wise Investments

Fund Air and Water Protection

Michigan should not continue sacrificing clean air and water during tight budget years. We need to prevent pollution. And we need to force polluters—not taxpayers—to pay for permit and enforcement programs.

Grow Smart Communities

Unplanned, out-of-control sprawl is damaging our communities. We need to stop using tax dollars to subsidize this destruction. Instead, Michigan should invest in smart, coordinated land use planning. Then we can grow vibrant, sustainable communities.

Take Trash Seriously

Landfills and incinerators dirty our air and threaten our water. If Michigan invests in recycling programs, we create jobs and get cleaner air and water.

Develop Transportation Choices

Michigan's poor transportation planning gives us traffic congestion, air pollution, and health problems. We do not need more roads. We need more public transit choices and regional transportation planning.

Find what you're looking for

Protecting Michigan's Heritage

Appendices

With great respect and many thanks

The *2005-2006 Michigan Environmental Briefing Book* was made possible by the generous support of the Joyce Foundation. Special thanks go to the professionals who shared their expertise to make this book a reality:

Rick Barber, Scenic Michigan

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Charlene Crowell, Michigan Land Use Institute

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Wendi Tilden, Michigan Environmental Council

Anne Woiwode, Sierra Club, Mackinac Chapter

Lisa Wozniak, Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

Learn more about us

This Briefing Book was produced by the Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund and the Michigan Environmental Council.

The Michigan League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Education Fund educates citizens and public officials about key environmental issues facing Michigan and the Great Lakes. It promotes active and responsible citizenship to address our environmental challenges. Michigan LCV Education Fund works with a wide range of public interest groups to advance clean water, clean air and healthy communities.

The Michigan Environmental Council represents 70 environmental, public health, and faith-based groups. It provides a public voice for the environment at every level of government. The Council promotes alternatives to urban blight and suburban sprawl, advocates for a sustainable economy, protects Michigan's water legacy for future generations, and works to diminish environmental impacts on public health.

Eliminate Harmful Chemicals

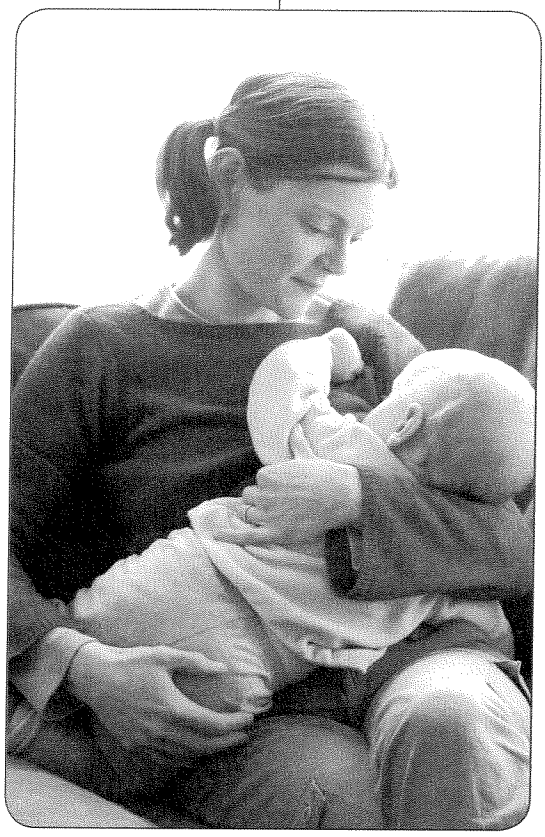
Too many toxic chemicals are polluting Michigan's air and water

Persistent toxic chemicals, such as lead, mercury, PCBs and dioxin, have left their legacy in our state and in our bodies.

Once released into our environment, these poisons stay around for years and sometimes forever. They build up in the food chain. And eventually they show up in our bodies. Studies show that persistent toxic chemicals can harm human health. Effects include nervous system injuries, cancer, genetic damage, reproductive problems, and developmental disorders.

The prevalence of lead contamination alone is causing a health crisis in Michigan. We have over 400 lead contaminated sites in our state. These poisoned sites include junkyards, industrial facilities, landfills, chemical plants, and old foundries.

Lead-based paint in poorly maintained, older homes can also pose major risks to kids. Research shows that lead poisoning causes lower intelligence (as measured by IQ tests), permanent learning disabilities, and behavioral problems in kids. Yet, lead poisoning is one of the most common, preventable children's health problems today.



Mothers with persistent chemicals in their bodies pass them on to their babies.

These chemicals poison Michigan families, and hurt our economy

Mothers with persistent chemicals in their bodies pass them on to their babies. It can happen during pregnancy and later, through their breast milk. Yet, doctors still agree that the best food for babies is their mothers' milk. It is the best nutrition, best protection against infections, and best for babies' overall development. To protect mothers' milk, our lawmakers must fight to keep the toxics out of it.

Toxic chemicals pose a special risk to growing minds and bodies. These toxics have caused dramatic increases in kids cancers and developmental disorders. Over the last 30 years, children's invasive cancer increased by 33% in the U.S. And the number of kids in special education grew 191%.

The potential economic impacts are staggering. Let's conservatively estimate that only 10% of autism, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy cases are caused by exposure to toxic pollution. That still means our national cost is $9.2 billion annually.

Other states are getting rid of harmful chemicals, Michigan can too

Michigan should follow the lead of Washington State and get rid of the most poisonous chemicals. In December 2000, the Washington Department of Ecology released a plan to phase-out the 25 worst bio-accumulative toxic pollutants by 2020.

Michigan is the heart of the Great Lakes. These poisons are building up in our waters and sportfish. We should adopt an aggressive strategy to prevent and remove these pollutants. Michigan lawmakers have a duty to protect the health of our kids and our economy.

learn how you can help on the next page

Eliminate Harmful Chemicals

How you can eliminate harmful chemicals:

1. Develop an achievable plan to phase-out the toxic chemicals that are our worst health hazards.
2. Enact new laws and rules that increase screening of young children for lead problems. Provide additional funding for lead hazard control in houses and soils.
3. Require the Michigan Department of Community Health to issue an annual advisory to parents, guardians, and caregivers. The advisory should list the top environmental threats to kids' health and give corresponding prevention methods.
4. Increase funding for the clean up of contaminated properties.
5. Reinstate funding for the fish advisory program. Include money for fish testing and the printing/distribution of fish consumptions advisories. These advisories should target high-risk populations and those who rely on fish for subsistence.
6. Ban the sale of devices containing mercury. Items include novelties, thermostats, car switches, and medical equipment.
7. Require notices to be posted near playground equipment made of chromated copper arsenate (a.k.a., CCA) treated wood. These should alert the public and recommend hand washing after using playground equipment.

Who you can contact to learn more about eliminating harmful chemicals:

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Polluted Michigan rivers—when can our kids go swimming again?

Along the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers, communities are still fighting dioxin contamination. Neighbors have known for decades that dioxin—a dangerous by-product of the Dow Chemical Company—was released into area rivers.

Dioxin is known to cause many kinds of cancer. It disrupts the function of immune systems and is linked to diabetes. Women are especially at risk, as dioxin can prevent pregnancies and has links to endometriosis. For kids, dioxin disrupts development and may impair their ability to learn.

In 2002, Michigan revealed it had found dioxin levels 80 times higher than clean up standards allow. These dangerous levels—found in people's backyards and in neighborhood parks—pose a very real public health threat. Unsafe dioxin levels are found all along the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers, and into Saginaw Bay. (That's about 50 miles of contamination.)

Despite these obvious threats to Michigan families, progress toward a clean up is moving at a snail's pace.

Other Michigan rivers have their own toxic problems. The Kalamazoo, Rouge, Detroit, Grand, Pine, Muskegon, and other rivers all suffer from a history of contamination. This pollution still limits their use today.

Michigan needs to clean up its rivers so that families can canoe, swim, and fish safely. To do so, the state will need to hold polluters accountable and find new funds for those cases when the polluter is bankrupt or missing.

Uphold Environmental Justice

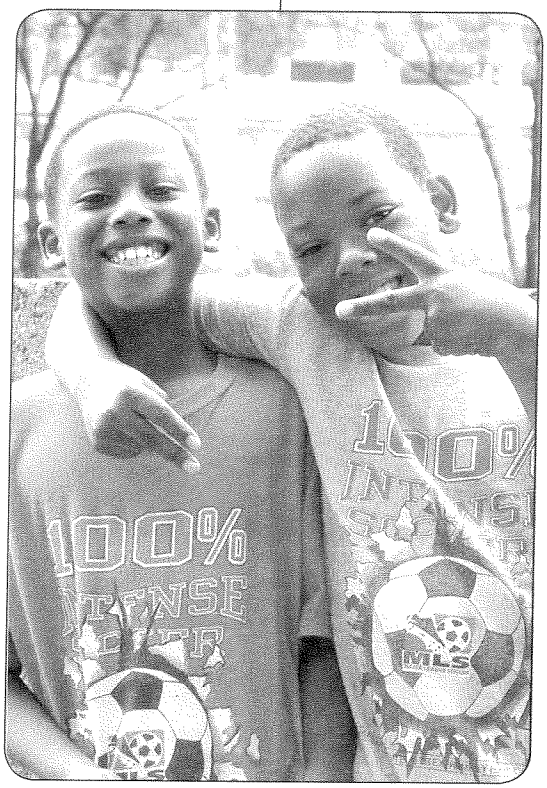
People of color unfairly live with more pollution in Michigan

Children of color have more asthma, lead poisoning, and other pollution-linked health problems.

In Detroit, people of color are 4 times more likely than whites to live within a mile of hazardous waste. About one-third of Michigan's toxic releases occur in Wayne County.

Race is the biggest predictor of whether people in Michigan live near an incinerator. Statewide, pollution sources (like large industries) are located more often near communities of color and low-income populations.

We need environmental justice to save Michigan's kids. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people—regardless of race, color, national origin, or income—in developing, implementing, and enforcing environmental laws (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).



Ensuring clean air, healthy communities, and equal protection under the law actually helps economic development.

Michigan has unequal enforcement of environmental laws

Research confirms it. Michigan has an unfair concentration of toxic hazards. And our government has not enforced environmental laws in communities of color or low-income areas at the same levels that it does in white and affluent communities.

"There's no question that minority and low-income communities have suffered disproportionately," says the Bush Administration's Director of the Office of Environmental Justice, Barry Hill. "There have been many, many studies that reflect that particular fact."

Unfortunately, some people in Michigan argue that enforcing clean air and water laws will hurt job opportunities. They believe a company will not be able to pay its workers if it has to pay for pollution damage or if it has to install modern pollution controls.

But evidence shows otherwise. Ensuring clean air, healthy communities, and equal protection under the law actually helps economic development. In fact, an unhealthy environment stops businesses from coming to a community—thereby preventing new jobs and economic growth.

Yet Michigan lawmakers still have not addressed these injustices.

Other states have made changes, Michigan should too

Other states have already taken steps to uphold environmental justice. Both Maryland and New Jersey issued executive orders, calling for state agencies to: (a) address the environmental and health effects on disproportionately impacted communities; (b) create a collaborative mechanism within state government; and (c) increase public participation in policy-making.

California's EPA is carrying out an Environmental Justice Action Plan. This plan takes precautionary approaches and analyzes cumulative impacts.

learn how you can help on the next page

Uphold Environmental Justice

How you can uphold environmental justice:

1. Prevent discrimination—based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, or income—in state programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment.
2. Adopt the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council's recommendations to revitalize urban areas and clean-up contaminated properties.
3. Ask state agencies to collect, maintain, and analyze information by race, national origin, and income. This lets them better compare the environmental and health risks borne by individuals and communities.
4. Assess the cumulative health risks of new projects on nearby communities. Protect at-risk populations from unacceptable exposures.
5. Require state agencies to increase public access to information and promote public participation.
6. Require industrial facilities to increase their pollution prevention efforts.

Who you can contact to learn more about upholding environmental justice:

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Asthma rates in Michigan's kids continue to rise

Children of color and impoverished kids living in urban areas are more likely to breathe Michigan's worst air pollution.

Among children, asthma is now the number one chronic disease in the United States. And asthma patterns in Michigan are a prime example of the unequal impact of toxic pollution on our communities.

Living in the central zip codes of Detroit can be extremely hazardous to your child's health, according to a recent study by the Michigan Department of Community Health. These zip codes have the most hospital discharges related to asthma.

Here, the health risks increase because of air pollution from toxic chemicals, transportation projects, dumping grounds, rail yards, and industrial plants.

In Michigan, 213,000 children and 654,000 adults have asthma. Moreover, our state has 160 asthma-related deaths every year. It is time to clean up our air. It's time to protect all of Michigan's kids.

Reduce Mercury Contamination

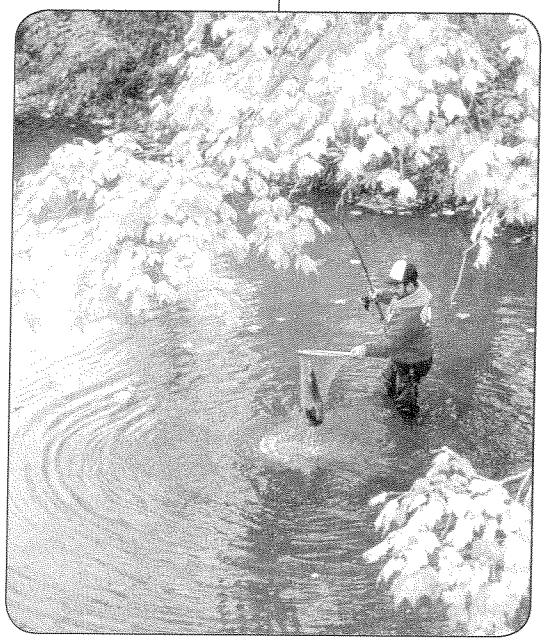
The mercury in our air and water hurts people and wildlife

In Michigan, 1 out of every 10 women of childbearing age has unsafe levels of mercury in her blood.

Each year, about 60,000 babies suffer developmental harm because their moms ate mercury-contaminated fish before or during pregnancy, according to a National Academy of Sciences report. Children exposed to mercury can develop learning disabilities and problems with their nervous systems.

Mercury is poisonous even in small amounts. It can cause subtle but permanent harm to the human brain and disrupt the reproductive health of wildlife. If eaten or inhaled at high levels, it can cripple or kill.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has issued statewide health advisories because of mercury contamination. These limit the amount of fish that can safely be eaten from our waters. This poses a real threat to Michigan's tourism industry and its 173,000 jobs. It could also impact the $12 billion spent by Michigan tourists each year.



Each year, about 60,000 babies suffer developmental harm because their moms ate mercury-contaminated fish.

Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of mercury pollution

Coal-fired power plants are the largest, uncontrolled source of airborne mercury pollution in Michigan.

The mercury comes out of the air via rain, snow, and dust particles. It falls into our lakes and streams.

Yet Michigan still relies on aging coal-fired power plants for most of its electricity. And they are stopping us from meeting clean air and water standards. These plants produce about 52% of Michigan's airborne mercury pollution. They also cause smog and acid rain. And they greatly contribute to global climate change.

The pollution from coal-fired power plants contributes to an alarming rise in asthma, chronic bronchitis, and heart disease. And it causes big problems for the 25 Michigan counties failing to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for air quality.

Michigan's coal-fired power plants are outdated and expensive

Michigan's reliance on coal-fired power plants is also stopping us from achieving statewide economic development goals. This outdated energy system is expensive. Pollution-related healthcare costs and productivity losses hit consumers and businesses hard, amounting to billions of dollars each year.

Michigan energy users also spend $26 billion each year on power plant fuel. And Michigan has to import all of its coal, 96% of petroleum products, and 75% of natural gas. This means that most of these dollars do not support Michigan businesses or alternative fuel sources.

Solutions already exist to stop mercury pollution

Cost-effective solutions already exist. We can reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power

continued

learn how you can help on the next page

Reduce Mercury Contamination

plants by 90% with modern pollution controls. These pollution controls should be installed on all of Michigan's coal-fired power plants.

Michigan citizens deserve a modern energy system that delivers safe and affordable power. A modern system uses clean, smart technology and locally produced resources. Michigan can start by using less electricity and investing in renewable energy. It would also help improve public health, preserve our environment, and halt global climate change. And it is a major step towards independence from Middle Eastern oil.

How you can reduce mercury contamination:

1. Require aging coal-fired power plants to install modern pollution controls. These can cut mercury emissions 90% by 2010.
2. Invest in a statewide energy efficiency program. Create a utility line charge to pay for the program. And make program funds available to all energy users.
3. Enact energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment sold in Michigan.
4. Develop domestic sources of renewable energy (such as wind, biomass and solar). Join nearly 20 other states in adopting a Renewable Electricity Standard. This would require utilities to supply some of their power from renewable energy sources.
5. Require any new fossil-fueled power plants to use the best pollution controls. Mandate "Integrated Gasification & Combined Cycle" as the minimum technology for new coal-fired power plants.

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In Michigan trial, new technology reduces mercury for less money

Technology exists to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. And, it is being tried here in Michigan.

DTE Energy is hosting a full-scale reduction trial at their St. Clair Station facility. This is part of a U.S. Department of Energy field-testing program. Early results at the site have yielded mercury reductions of 90% and higher.

Sorbent Technologies Corporation of Twinsburg, Ohio is conducting the trial. They inject brominated powdered activated carbons (B-PACTM) into the plant's pollution control equipment. They do it at different rates under different plant conditions. The injection material absorbs the mercury from exhaust gases.

The injection of B-PACTM is proving to be a cost-effective method for removing mercury from the exhaust gases of coal-fired power plants. Early data at St. Clair Station suggests that 90% removal of mercury is possible for 85% less money than previously estimated. Other projects around the country show similar results.

Fund Air and Water Protection

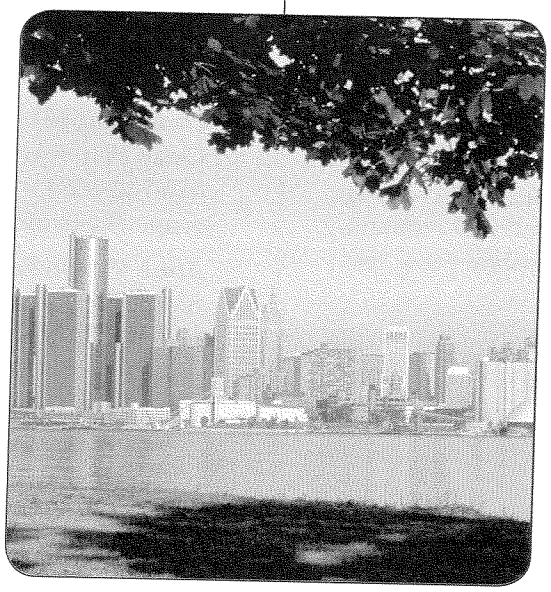
Public health at risk—MDEQ lacks funds to clean up toxic pollution

Budget cuts to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) are putting Michigan's people and natural resources at risk.

Michigan has over 4,200 sites of leaking underground storage tanks. These sites, which threaten our water resources, may cost as much as $1.7 billion to clean up. Yet, this year's budget cuts forced the MDEQ to stop scheduling clean ups for additional sites of toxic contamination.

Since 2001, general fund support for the MDEQ has dropped from $101 million to $28 million. Through budget gimmicks, the state has delayed having to layoff hundreds of workers. But the cuts are already impacting the health of our natural resources.

Now, Michigan is less able to monitor pollution being released into our rivers and streams. At current funding levels, MDEQ can only conduct complete inspections of major factories' toxic discharges every 4 to 5 years. Smaller facilities can go up to 10 years before being inspected by MDEQ.



By not making wise investments of our tax dollars to protect our water, air, and land, Michigan lawmakers exponentially increase damage to public health.

Polluters should pay, not Michigan taxpayers

The state receives money from a variety of sources. These include income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, and a variety of smaller fees. Some of those funds are dedicated to specific purposes. For instance, gasoline taxes are used primarily for roads.

Undedicated revenues are called general funds. The amount of general fund revenue increased from 1970 through 1999, to a peak of $9.8 billion. It has now dropped to $7.86 billion.

Since 2001, the state has enacted about $10 million in new fees from polluters. The fees pay for workers that issue and enforce discharge permits. Unfortunately, the new fees do not fully pay for the programs. This means that Michigan taxpayers sometimes subsidize more than half of the programs' costs.

If we prevent pollution, no one gets hurt

As the legislature drafts future budgets, it needs to look at the long-term impacts of cutting environmental protection. It should consider how those cuts affect Michigan taxpayers and the health of our kids.

The MDEQ should be authorized to spend more time and money on helping companies prevent pollution, rather than tracking pollution discharges. Then, the state could keep more toxics out of our air and water. Eliminating the discharge completely means the companies do not have to worry about permits and the state does not have to worry about toxic impacts. This also means that Michigan companies, and the state, save millions of dollars.

But, if the legislature continues to cut the MDEQ budget, Michigan will have weaker enforcement of environmental laws. And we may lose funding from federal matching grants (which will cut state programs even more). By not making wise investments of our tax dollars to protect our water, air, and land, Michigan law-

continued

learn how you can help on the next page

Fund Air and Water Protection

makers exponentially increase damage to public health.

How you can fund air and water protection:

1. Increase general fund support for those programs designed to protect our air, water, and land.
2. Implement new user fees for programs that regulate the discharge of pollutants into our air and water. Polluters, not taxpayers, need to pay the full costs of these programs.
3. Create new environmental clean-up funds. In 1995, the federal government stopped charging fees that funded the Superfund clean-up program for sites of environmental contamination. Michigan should reinstate those fees on a state level.
4. Dedicate the reauthorized underground storage tank fee to actually clean up these tanks.
5. Increase funding for pollution prevention programs. Doing so could permanently eliminate environmental and public health risks.
6. Support payments in lieu of taxes to locals for state-owned lands. At about $1 per Michigan resident, these annual payments give us access to nearly 4 million acres of state-owned lands.

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Toxic chemicals threaten public health in St. Clair Shores

In July 2001, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) were discovered in canals behind homes in St. Clair Shores. PCBs are toxic chemicals linked to cancer and other human (and aquatic) health impacts.

The canals were tested when they were dredged as a result of low lake levels. Testing of the dredge materials—necessary for disposal purposes—showed dangerously high levels. It was determined later that the canal had probably been contaminated with PCBs for over 20 years.

In June 2003, two months after the EPA finished their contaminated sediment clean up, area citizens did not believe the clean up had been done properly. So, Toxic Free Shores (a local community group) paid for independent confirmatory sampling. Their results showed PCB contamination 100 times higher than those reported by the EPA after the clean up. Their efforts prompted additional sampling by government agencies.

Continued funding to clean up the PCBs is critical. We need to protect the health and safety of residents living nearby. And we need to protect the folks whose water intakes are downstream.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough money in the MDEQ budget to protect our waters. The legislature needs to create a state budget that lets MDEQ do its job. All of Michigan's water resources should be more closely and frequently monitored. And when toxic contamination is discovered, it needs prompt and thorough attention from government agencies.

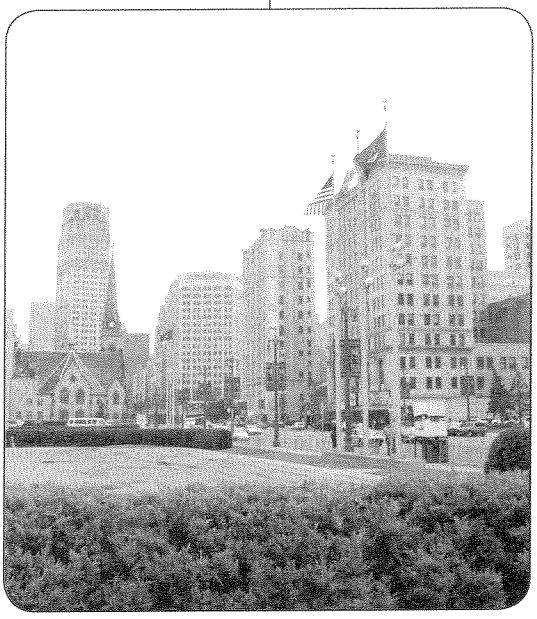
Grow Smart Communities

Out-of-control sprawl is hurting our cities and our farms

Sprawl is the haphazard, unplanned use of resources and land. And it's running rampant in Michigan.

In many of Michigan's older urban areas, sprawl has concentrated poverty and heightened problems with racial segregation. People who stay in these areas have higher costs for public services, limited public transportation, and fewer well-paying jobs. They also have deteriorating neighborhoods, schools, and property values.

It's not much better in Michigan's more rural areas. Sprawl is destroying our valuable wetlands and farms. People in these areas are faced with more traffic congestion and poorly planned strip-style development. Now they have fewer opportunities for outdoor recreation and farming.



In many of Michigan's older urban areas, sprawl has concentrated poverty and heightened problems with racial segregation.

Tax dollars are being wasted on bad state policies

Michigan's sprawling land use reflects our state's inability to fix its unplanned, uncoordinated system of growth and development. And it is wasting our tax dollars.

State policies have helped cause the decline of our cities. And they have helped shut down family farms. These policies encourage sprawl by spending our tax dollars on unplanned infrastructure expansion. The state also uses our tax dollars for some wasteful economic incentive programs that actually push growth out of established communities and into farm fields.

The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council (MLULC) of 2003 was created to find bipartisan solutions to our sprawl problems. One recommendation asked the governor to better coordinate interagency decisions. And they wanted stakeholders to participate in those decisions.

Diverse stakeholders from urban and rural areas can help set realistic land use goals for Michigan. We should be using our land in a more equitable and sustainable way. Stakeholders should include advocates from: historic preservation agencies, farmland protection groups, low-income areas, communities of color, and environmental groups.

Michigan needs to invest in coordinated land use planning

Governor Granholm has made progress on MLULC recommendations. She enacted a "Preserve First" policy for road repair and development. It makes sure that existing roads are fixed before the state will fund any new construction and expansion projects.

The Governor also partnered with the new Department of Labor and Economic Growth on a "Cool Cities" initiative. This initiative uses a broad range of state resources and incentives to invest in our older communities and neighborhoods. Revitalizing these areas will attract a younger generation of residents.

The MLULC also wants the state to work better with local governments. Together, state and local governments could coordinate proposals to ensure reinvestment and new private investment happen in existing urban areas. New projects should use existing infrastructure; encourage new retail businesses to serve urban residents; create new jobs; and enhance the quality of life

continued

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Grow Smart Communities

in Michigan's urban communities.

We need this "Smart Investments" approach to land use reform. It redirects the allocation of state funds to help curb sprawl and encourage redevelopment. State resources should support communities that implement fiscally responsible land use planning.

How you can grow smart communities:

1. Analyze state programs to find any direct and indirect subsidies of sprawling land use. Use the results to guide recommendations for legislative, budget and administrative changes. Place special emphasis on limiting sprawl and promoting more efficient growth patterns. (MLULC Report, Chapter 6, Section 18)
2. Increase incentives for cooperative local planning and zoning efforts that use regional solutions. (MLULC, Chapter 6, Section 13)
3. Establish a set of local land use planning "best practices." These should include joint planning agreements and outlay plans for maintaining roads and sewers. Create a criteria checklist of these "best practices" and give priority funding from state programs to local communities that use these tools.
4. Prioritize state and federal infrastructure funding for already developed areas. This would help maintain and improve the integrity of existing infrastructure. (MLULC Report, Chapter 7, Section 1a)

All of the MLULC recommendations are available online at www.michiganlanduse.org.

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Michigan locals fight sprawl, but still lose Inkster greenspace

Inkster citizens wanted help in protecting a 12-acre oasis of undeveloped greenspace. They live in a heavily urbanized, western Wayne County suburb.

Michigan Environmental Council helped the local group—Citizens United for Action—get the scientific and legal data to defend the site. But without support from state officials, the citizens lost their greenspace. Instead, Inkster's local officials worked with developers and hurried to build up the land.

"I am not ignorant of the necessity of development," said Citizens United for Action member Darryl Braun. "We need houses in which to live, stores in which to shop and offices in which to work. However, unrelenting urban sprawl is not the answer. We do not need to develop every foot of land. There is a great deal of blight and vacant buildings, lots and houses in Inkster."

Braun believes these properties should be redeveloped and rehabilitated. And he thinks there are not enough woodlands for recreation.

Inkster citizens wanted the forested site at the corner of Cherry Hill and Beech Daly roads to be the first of many preserved greenspaces near their homes.

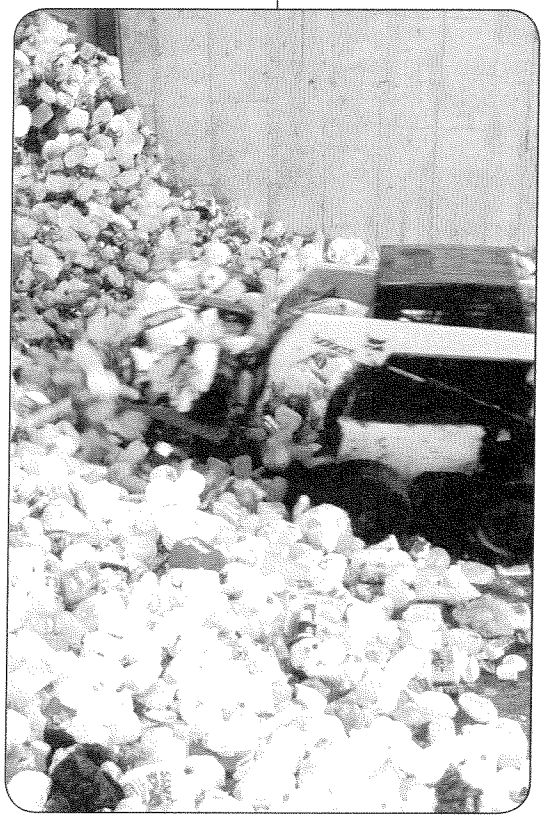
Take Trash Seriously

Good start, but Michigan still needs to reduce its solid waste stream

In 2004, Michigan finally got serious about its trash problems.

Currently the 3rd leading importer of trash from outside its borders, our Great Lakes State is close to becoming the "Great Waste State." But, last year Governor Granholm signed 11 bills into law that promise to slow the flow of garbage to Michigan. The new laws force out-of-state waste to meet minimal Michigan standards, which is a good start.

Now it is time for Michigan to start cleaning its own house. We need to regain our leadership position in recycling to reduce our reliance on landfills and incinerators. Recycling reduces the environmental impacts of solid waste disposal. It also creates jobs through the reuse of the recycled materials. Michigan's excess landfill disposal capacity has provided our state with artificially low disposal rates, the lowest in the Great Lakes region.



Michigan is the only Great Lakes state that does not provide recycling funds through a fee or surcharge on waste disposal.

Michigan's landfills and incinerators pollute our air and water

Today, landfills are the safest way to dispose of solid waste. But they still pose a real pollution threat to groundwater in Michigan. In addition, a working landfill pollutes our air by releasing noxious odors and toxic emissions.

Michigan also uses incinerators to get rid of its trash. These incinerators pollute our air. Solid waste incinerators are some of Michigan's leading sources of dioxin, mercury, PCBs and other toxic chemicals, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The pollution from these facilities—and from the state's landfills—falls disproportionately on their neighboring lower-income and minority communities.

Incinerators are also financial boondoggles. Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Jackson County use trash incinerators. And they pay several times more to get rid of trash than their neighbors. In fact, the City of Detroit pays 10 times more to dispose of garbage in the city's incinerator than its suburbs pay to dump trash in private landfills.

Recycling and composting are cleaner, and they create jobs

Recycling and composting are cleaner ways of handling waste than landfills and incinerators. Paper mills, glass bottlers, plastics manufacturers, and other re-processors use recycled materials. When compared to the use of virgin materials, this reuse conserves energy and water, and it reduces air pollution.

End-use markets exist for almost all scrap materials. But, those new businesses will not come into Michigan if we do not create a steady stream of recycled materials. That stream can only come from full-scale recycling programs in our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, these re-processors also have to compete against incentives that favor the use of virgin materials.

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Take Trash Seriously

We need our communities to invest in full-scale recycling programs. This would have great financial benefits. Unfortunately, most of our communities cannot afford the start-up costs.

Other states help their local governments make that initial investment in recycling. But Michigan does not. In fact, Michigan is the only Great Lakes state that does not provide recycling funds through a fee or surcharge on waste disposal. Michigan's glut of cheap landfill capacity adds to our local communities' resistance to starting (or expanding) recycling and composting programs.

How you can take trash seriously:

1. Expand the Bottle Bill to include water, juice and tea containers.
2. Enact a surcharge on all waste disposed in Michigan landfills and incinerators. Use the proceeds to support community-based recycling programs.
3. Ban toxic and easily recycled materials from landfills and incinerators.
4. Collect items that pose unnecessary safety risks when they are put in landfills. Focus on electronics (computers, microwave ovens, etc.) and other hazardous waste (paints, pesticides, etc.). Make manufacturers pay for this collection system.
5. Provide financial incentives for recycling and reprocessing. And eliminate subsidies for the use of virgin materials.
6. Adopt a new state solid waste plan with a reinvigorated county planning process.
7. Assist local communities in closing their municipal solid waste incinerators.

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Create new jobs – update Michigan's Bottle Bill today!

One way to increase recycling and address our major litter problem is to update Michigan's Bottle Bill. The current law is both popular and effective. It recovers over 95% of the state's returnable bottles and cans. It also reduces litter, increases recycling, creates jobs, and saves money.

But most juice, tea, sport drink, and water containers were hardly even sold commercially when the law took effect. Now, they make up nearly 20% of the beverage container market.

Empty water bottles are piling up as litter on Great Lakes beaches, major highways, city streets, and rural roads. Our Bottle Bill needs to include today's beverage containers.

In the summer of 2004, a PET recycler in Novi, Michigan was forced out of business. They had to shut down due to insufficient supplies of PET plastic in Michigan. PET is the primary plastic used in making water bottles.

An expanded bottle bill could have saved those jobs. And it could have kept those containers off of our roadways and beaches.

Develop Transportation Choices

Michigan has lots of traffic, and lots of air pollution

A typical metro-Detroit commuter loses the equivalent of 6 working days a year sitting in traffic jams. This wastes time and fuel. It also increases air pollution.

Sadly at 86%, Michigan leads the nation in commuters who drive alone to work. In the last 10 years, the number of miles driven annually in Michigan soared nearly 25%, growing 4 times faster than the state's population. This year, state motorists will drive nearly 100 billion miles. Those miles will cost motorists $10 billion in gas. And the vast majority of those dollars leave the state never to be seen again.

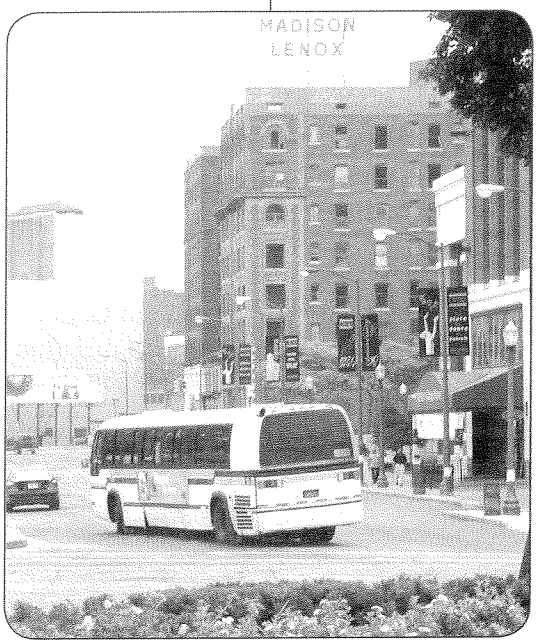
Southeast Michigan fails to meet air quality standards for excessive smog and soot in the air. This is one factor that contributes to our child asthma rates being among the highest in the country. These violations of the Clean Air Act—also happening in the Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Muskegon areas—will lead to restrictions on new industries in these communities.

Detroit is the only metropolitan area in the country without a comprehensive transit system. Yet the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) still does not prioritize mass transit in its future transportation plans.

Bad transportation planning is to blame

Michigan has failed in making long-range transportation plans. Too often, our local and state governments only offer Michigan residents the same 1950s-era transportation choices. They keep calling for more, wider highways. This approach wastes tax dollars by increasing traffic, sprawl and air pollution.

Unfortunately, funding raids and a lack of political will have stymied efforts to improve the situation. Right now, the state invests less than 10% of its annual $3 billion statewide transportation budget in public transportation. In the last 2 years, the legislature cut transit funds by $20 million.



Right now, the state invests less than 10% of its annual $3 billion statewide transportation budget in public transportation.

Federal equity failure cost Michigan millions in lost transit support

Michigan only receives 88 cents back for every dollar in gasoline taxes we send to Washington. Michigan is one of several donor states that unfairly pay more than is returned in fuel taxes. These donor states are pushing for a minimum 95 cents return for every dollar sent to Washington. Michigan also suffers from federal funding formulas that favor rail-based transit systems over bus-based transit systems.

Currently, the failure to reauthorize a new federal transportation bill has cost Michigan $343 million. Included in this overall loss are $36 million for mass transit funding and $77 million for County Road Commissions.

More modern transportation choices would improve economic and public health

In 2003, the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council said that our cities "need a diverse set of mobility options." They found that if state

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Develop Transportation Choices

leaders join with federal and local governments, Michigan would be able to "support modern, cost-efficient, multi-modal transportation systems." This would make our cities more accessible and attractive to everyone.

Modern transportation choices would enhance economic development and increase public health. Transit options should range from buses and trains to more bike lanes and walkable greenways. A new train stop or bus station can serve as the catalyst for new businesses, better housing, and rising incomes. It could provide residents better access to good-paying jobs, quality health care, or college classes. And if we provide more opportunities to walk or bike to work, Michigan could decrease its obesity rates and air pollution. Overall, investing in more transportation choices pays off in healthier Michigan residents.

How you can develop transportation choices:

1. Fund public transit to its full 10% constitutional limit of the Michigan Transportation Fund. This would boost available transit funds by $30–50 million a year.
2. Work with members of Michigan's congressional delegation to achieve a 95% return on our state's federal transportation investment.
3. Integrate light rail into our current transit system to enhance mobility options and reduce traffic pressure on Michigan roads.
4. Improve long-term planning to better integrate all transportation options—walking and biking paths, buses, commuter rails, and cars.

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Michigan communities vote to invest in public transportation

In sharp contrast to the state legislature's resistance to funding public transportation, 13 of 14 Michigan communities voted overwhelmingly to either continue or increase local property taxes to support their bus systems.

"Public transportation is valued and people are willing to step to the plate and fund their fair share at the local level," said Clark Harder, executive director of the state's oldest and largest association of transit systems, the Michigan Public Transit Association.

In 2004, the successful millage votes passed in these Michigan counties:

Charlevoix: 65% approval
Clare: 63% approval
Genesee: 54% approval
Gogebic: 77% approval
Ingham: 60% approval
Isabella: 62% approval
Lake: 56% approval
Marquette: 65% approval
Mason: 62% approval
Midland: 70% approval
Ontanonagon: 63% approval
Shiawassee: 62% approval
Tuscola: 61% approval

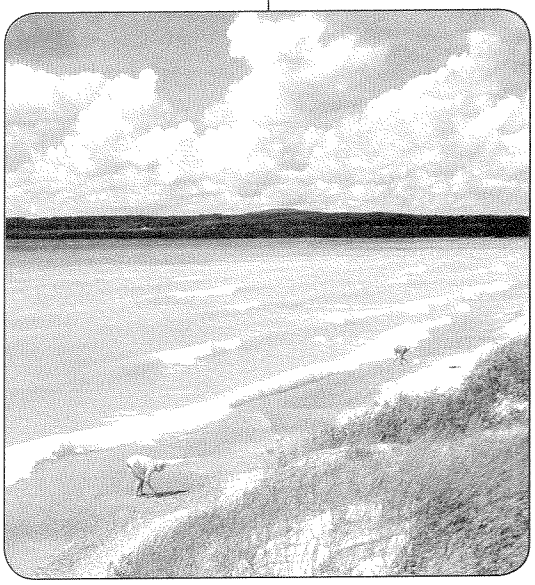
Safeguard Great Lakes Water

Thirsty neighbors want our Great Lakes water

Every year, fresh water becomes scarcer and more precious.

We all know that water is an essential resource. And about one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water is found in the Great Lakes. But, these waters are not limitless.

Already, Michigan residents are facing water shortages and conflicts. In Monroe County, unregulated water pumping by mining operations is reducing local water supplies. In Saginaw, wasteful irrigation from big agricultural operations caused neighboring wells to go dry. And the pumping of water from our rivers and streams—such as the St. Joseph River in southwest Michigan—is costing our state fishing and tourism dollars. An additional threat comes from communities just outside the Great Lakes basin, hoping to use the water to fuel unplanned suburban sprawl.



Already, Michigan residents are facing water shortages and conflicts.

By 2025, worldwide estimates show that 48 countries will be severely short of water. Estimates also show that 50% of the people on earth will not have access to clean water supplies. This means that some people may try to use international trade laws to pierce the thin protections Michigan now relies on to prevent the diversion and export of Great Lakes water. Better stewardship both home and abroad is needed to preserve fresh water.

Michigan lawmakers need to honor their promise to limit water withdrawals

In response to pressures and proposals to divert Great Lakes water, the Great Lakes States and Provinces signed the 1985 Great Lakes Charter. In doing so, they agreed to protect our common water resources. They also agreed that the most important first step was to pass laws governing large-scale water withdrawals (over 2 million gallons per day). To date, Michigan is the only state that has failed to pass such a water conservation law.

In 1986, Congress supported the Great Lakes Charter by passing the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The Act ensures that each Great Lakes governor can veto a diversion or export of Great Lakes water.

But, the vast majority of the United States' people live outside of the Great Lakes basin. And many of those live in so-called "thirsty states." This increases the possibility that WRDA—our only authority to block a diversion—could be amended or repealed. This would leave Michigan with no way to stop a diversion of Great Lakes water.

To deal with these and other concerns, the Great Lakes States and Provinces now look to better protect our water from export and diversion via a proposed "Great Lakes Compact." The outcome of this Great Lakes Compact is critical for Michigan.

Michigan voters want new laws to protect Great Lakes water

Michigan voters overwhelmingly support new laws to regulate large water withdrawals, according to a recent poll. Support is strong across the board, with Republicans (at 80%), Independents (at 83%), and Democrats (at 75%). Michigan needs laws that will better protect our Great

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Safeguard Great Lakes Water

Lakes from being siphoned off to other parts of the country, or the world. And we need to create a fair, reasonable system to manage water use that will withstand legal scrutiny.

Michigan's lawmakers know what they need to do. The Senate's bipartisan Great Lakes Conservation Task Force (chaired by Majority Leader Ken Sikkema) asserted in its Citizens' Agenda report that "There is an immediate need for an aquifer protection statute to protect the public and the environment from both present and future problems caused by water withdrawals."

How you can safeguard Great Lakes water:

1. Enact a water withdrawal law that ensures the Great Lakes are protected from unwise uses and diversions.
2. Ensure that water withdrawals adhere to 3 key principles: preventing harm to our water resources; conserving this vital resource; and, ultimately enhancing it.
3. Improve water use reporting.

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Water bottling plant shows Michigan law is full of holes

Everyone agrees that water is critical to Michigan's future. But the recent fight over the water bottling plant ouside of Big Rapids shows that Michigan needs better stewardship of its waters.

The bottling facility pumps up to 720,000 gallons of Michigan spring water, which is sold under Nestle/Perrier's Ice Mountain label. This bottled water is shipped throughout the Midwest, across the country, and has even been spotted overseas.

The Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation (formed by citizens who own property near the plant) want to put a stop to the company's plans. Based on the predictions of Perrier's own experts, the planned pumping rate of 400 gallons per minute will reduce the flow of a nearby stream by as much as 35%. And this has area homeowners and anglers worried.

The only water withdrawal permit clearly required under Michigan law is issued under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This act is woefully inadequate in addressing possible natural resource impacts. So, the Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation challenged the state's approval of the bottling plant permit in court. They won at the Circuit Court. That decision is currently under appeal.

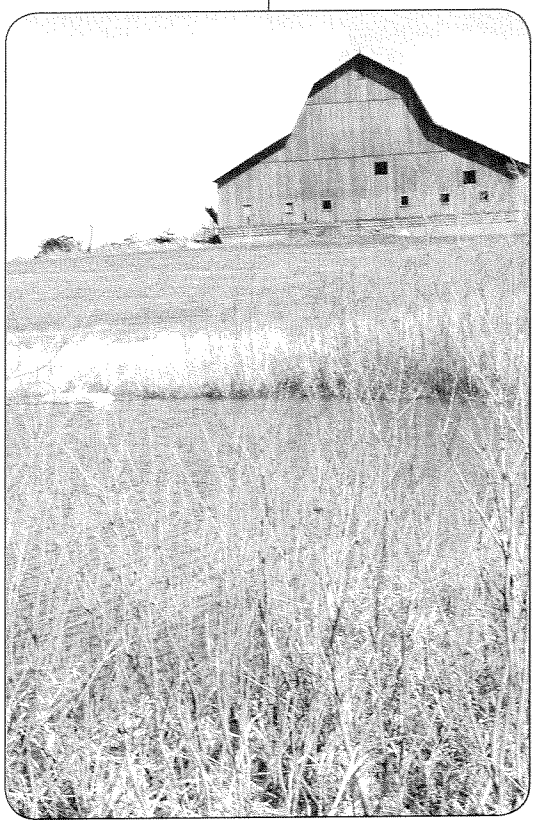
Sustain Family Farms

Agriculture is big business, yet Michigan is losing its farmland

Agriculture is Michigan's 2nd largest industry. It generates $37 billion in revenues. And it provides more than 500,000 jobs.

But since 1993, we have lost 300,000 acres of farmland in Michigan. This was some of our most productive and profitable land. Now, it has been converted and developed for non-farming uses.

If our current development patterns continue, Michigan will lose a million and a half acres by 2040. That is equal in size to 68 townships. Along with our farmland, Michigan has lost whole sectors of its agricutural base. This includes local processing and farm support systems, implement dealerships, and grain elevators.



Along with our farmland, Michigan has lost whole sectors of its agricutural base.

Factory farms are growing, and so are threats to people's health and jobs

Large-scale, concentrated livestock operations (a.k.a., CAFOS or factory farms) are replacing Michigan's family farms. These factory farms have by-products that pollute our air and water. And they threaten the health of our Great Lakes and its people. And Michigan promotes them.

Because of health concerns, the American Public Health Association has called for a moratorium on such massive factory farms. These factory farms spread large amounts of animal manure on nearby land. This animal waste increases human exposure to heavy metals, antibiotics, and pathogen bacteria. We are also exposed to high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. And we risk breathing more dust, mold, and volatile gases (like ammonia and hydrogen sulfide).

Unlike more sustainable farms, studies indicate that these factory farms often cost more jobs than they create. They are linked to declines in business purchases and infrastructure. They also reduce property values and population.

Moreover, factory farms put small to mid-size farms out of business. To survive, these local farmers have to sell their land to residential developers. This contributes to Michigan's loss of farmland. Yet research shows that these smaller family farms are vital ingredients for healthy rural communities and economies.

Michigan needs more sustainable farms

To protect Michigan's agricultural heritage and revitalize our rural economy, we need to identify and secure a base of prime farmland. We also need to discourage agricultural practices that pollute our air, land, and water.

Michigan needs to promote sustainable farming practices. To do so, lawmakers should support existing value-added programs that protect the environment, which would also provide incentives for responsible farming practices. These programs can help farmers increase their profits, which means Michigan farms stay healthy and viable.

These incentives would also help keep food processing near the farms, thereby creating more

continued

learn how you can help on the next page

Sustain Family Farms

jobs to process goods. And by not exporting our raw goods, we help reduce transportation and packaging costs. Our state should encourage citizens to grow, process, and buy locally—all of which benefit Michigan's economy.

How you can sustain family farms:

1. Develop a comprehensive Rural Legacy and Farm Viability program that focuses on protecting critical farmland and their associated local support and processing systems. (Michigan Land Use Leadership Council Recommendations, Chapter 5, Section 5)
2. Identify blocks of critical farmland for protection.
3. Complete a full review of current and proposed tax reforms for farmland protection. Then compile a single comprehensive resource for these programs to fulfill the recommendations established by the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.
4. Establish a new regulatory framework for confined animal feeding operations (a.k.a., CAFOs or factory farms). Ensure it provides guidance for strong enforcement of permits and dramatically reduces associated air and water pollution.

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Preserve Michigan's agricultural diversity, find economic stability

"Michigan is the 2nd largest producer in the U.S. in terms of the variety of commercial crops—tart cherries, blueberries, cut flowers, bedding plants," says Tom Bloomer, who has lived with his wife Roseanne on a farm since 1982. They are located just north of downtown Ann Arbor.

He wonders why the state is not doing more to protect this diversity. "A diverse agriculture is better for us; it makes us less vulnerable to economic stress than states that only grow 2 crops."

Another long recession in crop and pork prices, the increasing competition of large-scale hog operations and the limitations posed by all the new houses popping up around them, forced the Bloomers to explore more innovative farming options. They decided to try roasting and marketing the soybeans they had raised as livestock feed for years. It is a new product Tom hopes will appeal to the snack-food market as a healthy, tasty alternative.

"People ask me, 'Why don't you just sell your land and move your farm to Iowa?'" Tom says, admitting that his small hog farm could no longer compete financially with the pressure to sell his land for yet another housing development. "I ask them, 'Why would you want me to? Is that what you want? To live in an area of nothing but houses?' There's no reason agriculture shouldn't be part of our diverse economic mix."

Protect Coastal Areas

Michigan's coastlines benefit our tourism economy and wildlife

With 3,200 miles—the longest coastline of any state in the contiguous 48 states—Michigan is literally defined by the Great Lakes shores. And when we consider public lands such as Nordhouse Dunes and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and our resort communities like Saugatuck and Harbor Springs, we find that Michigan's coastline is essential to our tourism economy.

Michigan's coastal areas also provide critical wildlife habitat and unique ecological functions. Michigan's state wildflower (the dwarf lake iris) only grows on beach ridges in northern Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Rare animals, like the Lake Huron locust and the piping plover, rely on the Great Lakes coastlines for their survival as well.

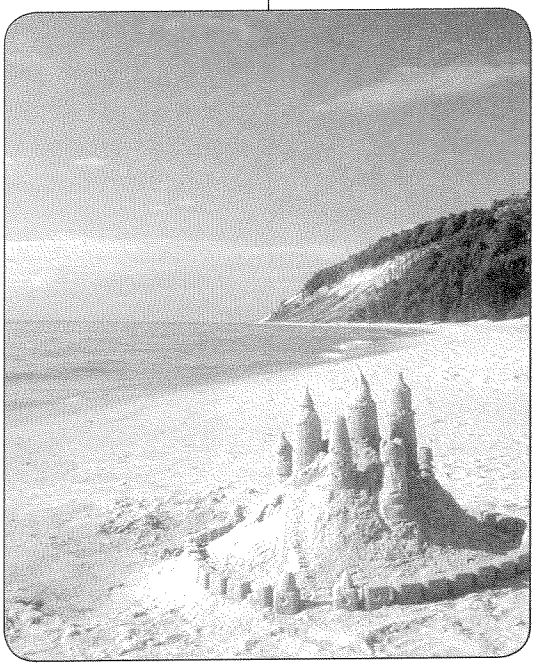
Yet our Great Lakes coastal areas are being damaged

Despite their economic and ecological significance, Michigan's coastal areas have been greatly damaged and still face many severe, on going threats. The effects of historic toxic contamination, hardening the shoreline with seawalls, and sand dune mining still linger today.

Since the passage of the 1976 Sand Dune Protection and Management Act, the number of sand dune mining sites has nearly doubled. Critical dunes are still at risk from mining. Places like the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore draw more than $100 million a year in tourism income, yet dune sand in Michigan can be mined for as little as $5 per ton. Unfortunately, budget cutbacks mean the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) cannot provide adequate oversight of mining operations.

Dune sand is used primarily by the foundry industry to make automobile parts. Yet many years ago, Ford Motor Company found it possible to use other sources. So they adopted a corporate policy to not use dune sand. A state inventory has revealed that extensive inland sand deposits exist, and make fine substitutes for dune sand.

More recently, intense shoreline development, expansion of harbors and marinas, and removal of vegetation from our Great Lakes bottomland present a new range of threats that must be addressed.



Places like the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore draw more than $100 million a year in tourism income, yet dune sand in Michigan can be mined for as little as $5 per ton.

Michigan needs to protect its shores

Michigan's Great Lakes shorelines are vital to our quality of life, our economy, and our cultural identity.

Our lawmakers need to preserve this heritage. Due to MDEQ budget cuts, Michigan cannot adequately enforce state laws designed to protect our coastlines.

We need to protect our coastal sand dunes, wetlands, and bottomlands from development pressures. Michigan should establish better zoning ordinances and coordinated planning by local governments. Michigan should secure more public land for future generations.

learn how you can help on the next page

Protect Coastal Areas

How you can protect coastal areas:

1. Facilitate local inter-governmental cooperation to establish protective shoreline zoning. Promote the adoption and enforcement of local zoning ordinances that protect coastal systems. And provide expertise and technical assistance to local units of government.
2. Require the complete phase-out of mining in Michigan's sand dunes. Under a phase-out, companies could finish mining at their current locations (with improved oversight by the MDEQ), but would not be able to open any new mining sites.
3. Expand public ownership to protect Michigan's shorelines from development pressures.
4. Protect critical fisheries habitat from degradation.
5. Assess enforcement needs and increase staffing in environmental agencies to provide adequate resources for enforcing current laws.

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Proposed boat launch threatens unique Michigan shoreline

Cross Village Township is a small Lake Michigan shoreline community located in Emmet County, Michigan. Its current township park has a beach, boat launch, picnic area, and small gravel parking area. The park reflects the rural character of this community and its natural environment.

But this dynamic stretch of shoreline is in danger. Recent low water levels prompted the Township to apply for permits to create a "port" and relocate the boat launch. They also want to expand the parking lot and erect a large sheetpile bulkhead armored by riprap. To do so means filling coastal wetlands and dredging an extensive swath of public trust bottomlands.

Ten years ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied a similar request at this site. Today, this park's future is uncertain, as permit reviews are underway.

The proposed changes would dramatically alter the beach profile and harm endangered species. This coastal area is home to the federally endangered piping plovers. These little shore birds nest among the beach rocks near the township park and routinely forage along that stretch of beach. This area is also home to endangered plant species. Both Pitcher's thistle and Lake Huron tansy are only found in the Great Lakes Basin.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has been working with locals to find alternative solutions to the park expansion. They hope to find a solution that provides a reliable, flexible boat launch (to accommodate high and low water conditions) yet still protects the area's natural shoreline and endangered species.

Regulate Risky Mining Activities

Sulfide mining threatens the health of Michigan's ground water

Mining in sulfide-based ore bodies is a risky business.

Sulfide mining combines metallic deposits with sulfur to form metallic sulfides. If these sulfide ores or their waste rocks are exposed to water and air, they form sulfuric acid. And if not properly contained and managed, the resulting acid drainage pollutes ground and surface waters. It could ruin wildlife habitat, endanger human health, and hurt Michigan's outdoor recreation economy.

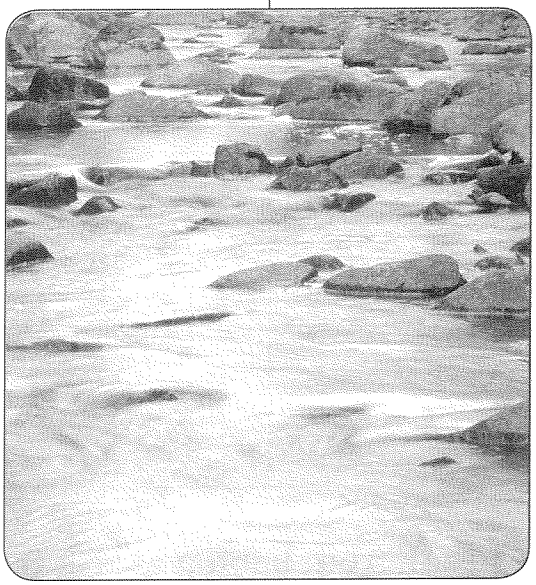
Across the country, there are many examples of the damage caused by mining operations, including sulfide mines. Luckily, the industry keeps improving pollution controls. And some companies work hard to reduce their environmental impacts.

However, the risk of severe environmental harm from any one sulfide mine is high and uncertain. Even "state-of-the-art" mining has unpredictable risks of both technical and operational failure. Contamination from acid drainage can persist for many years after mines close. And it has the potential to reach far beyond the physical boundaries of a mine.

Michigan's new mining law helps protect our water, but more is needed

In 2004, the Michigan legislature passed a new law addressing sulfide-based ore mining. In doing so, our lawmakers helped to protect our state's water resources and landscapes. They also helped revive Michigan's proud mining tradition.

Now we need comprehensive rules to ensure this new mining law will prevent harm. Michigan's Upper Peninsula already faces proposed mining activities in sulfide-based ore bodies. Clear rules will protect our fragile resources and provide certainty to residents, regulators, and potential mine developers.



Clear rules will protect our fragile resources and provide certainty to residents, regulators, and potential mine developers.

The legislation and proposed rules to regulate sulfide mining operations are being developed by a broad-based workgroup. These stakeholders range from industry, state agencies, and local officials to residents and environmental advocates.

With proper oversight, new mines could be a boon to our Upper Peninsula economy

The Upper Peninsula is on the verge of a new era in mining. The region's extraordinary reserves of copper, zinc, nickel, uranium and gold are spurring a dramatic land rush. Mine developers are securing mineral rights at a rate not seen since the great copper rush of a century ago.

Primary targets of mine development are extensive sulfide ore bodies. They are rich in target metals that are in high demand on the global market. For example, Kennecott Minerals Company has estimated the value of the nickel deposits at their Eagle Project in northern Marquette County at $2.8 billion.

But our Upper Peninsula is also a state treasure. It is renowned for its dramatic landscapes and abundant wildlife. An interconnected system of inland lakes, wetlands, streams and rivers feeds Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. These waters also support extensive forests and provide

continued

learn how you can help on the next page

Regulate Risky Mining Activities

homes to many game species.

Michigan needs to ensure that sulfide mining does not damage these waters. They are too essential to the tourism, economic, and cultural vitality of the area. How our state chooses to balance the protection of our natural heritage with the economic benefits of new mines is critical.

How you can regulate risky mining activities:

1. Promulgate rules to provide details of permit requirements, site selection criteria, environmental impact assessment, bonding provisions, and performance standards for operation, closure, and remediation.

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Michigan's coaster brook trout habitat at risk from sulfide mining

The Salmon Trout River is found in Marquette County, Michigan.

It is the last river on the south shore of Lake Superior with a naturally reproducing population of coaster brook trout. This is a unique population of brook trout that spawn in tributary streams. These fish spend most of their lives foraging along the coasts of the Great Lakes. Once found in abundance on the Salmon Trout River, coaster brooks have been in decline since about 1950.

The Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership (CLSWP) decided to help protect coaster brook trout habitat in the Salmon Trout River. With grants from the Lake Superior Basin Trust, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office, the group completed over 20 restoration projects. CLSWP's many volunteers and youth crews improved road stream crossings, stabilized stream banks, and trapped sediments in the river.

Despite successes thus far, the Salmon Trout River's health remains at risk. There is a nickel and copper mine in the heart of the watershed. If the company that owns the mineral rights in the watershed decides to conduct sulfide-based ore mining, water quality could be damaged.

When sulfide ore is exposed to water and air during mining, sulfuric acid is an unavoidable by-product. If not properly contained, the sulfuric acid can leach into nearby wells, streams and lakes. This means it can severely pollute surface water.

Michigan needs clear rules about sulfide mining to help protect our coaster brook trout and other wildlife habitat.

Preserve Wetlands

Wetlands benefit people and wildlife

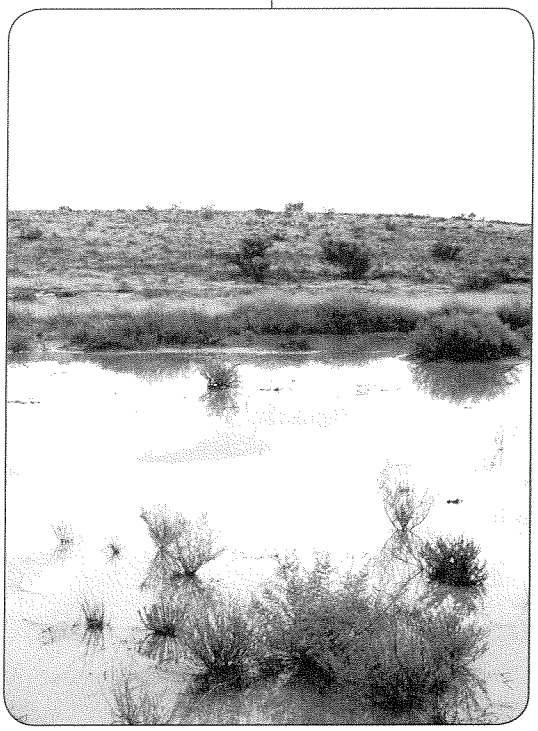
Wetlands are among Michigan's most valuable ecosystems.

Wetland plants and soils control erosion and trap pollutants. This means they help clean our water. Wetlands also control flood damage. They act as hydrologic sponges, temporarily storing and then slowly releasing floodwaters. Doing so reduces flood peaks, which protects property owners from damage.

Michigan's tourism economy—and much of its fishing and hunting opportunities—depends on healthy wetlands. These wetlands provide vital habitat for a broad range of fish and wildlife species.

Yet almost half of Michigan's wetlands have been destroyed

Michigan has lost about 50% of its wetlands since European settlement, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When Europeans first settled Michigan, wetland functions were not recognized or valued. So these settlers dredged, drained, and filled wetlands. Many federal, state, and local programs encouraged this destruction.



Michigan's tourism economy, and much of its fishing and hunting opportunities, depends on healthy wetlands.

In a 1979 effort to stop this loss, Michigan became the first state to pass a law that regulates dredging, draining, filling, and construction in wetlands. This law complements other laws that control erosion and regulate activities in the Great Lakes' submerged lands, inland lakes and streams.

Michigan was also the first state (and is still only 1 of 2 states) authorized to administer the federal wetland protection program. While the Federal Corp of Engineers kept jurisdiction over the Great Lakes and its connecting channels and rivers, Michigan's assumption of the federal wetland program has reduced "double permitting" for most wetland areas in the state. In other states, developers must get a federal permit in addition to the state permits on projects involving wetlands. For this reason, developers have been supportive of the Michigan program.

Despite these efforts, Michigan's wetlands continue to be drained, filled, and developed. This destruction continues because the state and federal wetland programs have many loopholes and lack thorough enforcement.

For instance, developers still drain wetlands for agricultural purposes. Then the next year, these developers attempt to build houses on the converted wetland.

If we don't fix the state wetland program, Michigan will lose it

In 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its initial review of Michigan's state-administered wetland program. This review found many deficiencies in our program. If these flaws are not fixed, the EPA may revoke Michigan's authority to administer the federal wetland program.

Making the EPA's required changes will allow Michigan to keep the program. It will also ensure that our wetlands continue to provide clean water, wildlife habitat, and flood control for our children.

learn how you can help on the next page

Preserve Wetlands

How you can preserve wetlands:

1. Remove exemptions and close loopholes in state law that are not authorized by federal law. Specific exemptions include: drain maintenance and agricultural drainage, iron and copper mining tailings basins, and road maintenance.
2. Change state statute and the administrative rules to require mitigation for all wetland impacts.
3. Protect isolated wetlands by requiring Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to complete a comprehensive statewide wetland inventory. Legislative changes will allow MDEQ to streamline completion of this inventory.
4. Expand Governor Granholm's Executive Directive 2004-4 to protect high-value wetlands on private lands (in addition to the ones on state lands).
5. Improve the screening process to ensure that threatened and endangered species are given full consideration and protection during permit review.

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Local residents fight to save Willow Grove wetlands

In the Northeast corner of Troy, Michigan is a wet, low lying area that is part bog, part forested wetlands, and part remnant lake plain prairie. This area is known as the Willow Grove wetlands.

In April 1998, the city approved funding to drain the wetlands at the request of a developer. But area residents knew that the proposed draining would destroy a connected blue heron rookery with 26 active nests. So the Troy Wildlife and Wetlands Coalition (TW&WC)—an association of Troy homeowners—contacted the East Michigan Environmental Action Council (EMEAC) for help. EMEAC helped draft local ordinances so that the city could protect the Willow Grove Wetlands and its other wetlands.

At several points, it appeared that the Willow Grove wetlands would be lost. A politician defeated the proposed wetlands protection and natural features setback ordinances. This local official claimed the proposed ordinances would allow the city to confiscate its residents' property. Moreover, the folks trying to save the area were not allowed to participate in the state permit proceedings.

Thanks to the well-organized opposition from TW&WC homeowners, the city council decided to not drain the area. Current city council members are also reconsidering the proposed ordinances. So for now, the Willow Grove wetlands remain intact.

To truly protect Michigan's wetlands, we need an improved state program with more funding and less loopholes for developers. But, the Willow Grove fight also shows that Michigan residents can make a difference by getting involved locally. It is this combination of local and state efforts that can best protect our wetlands—big and small.

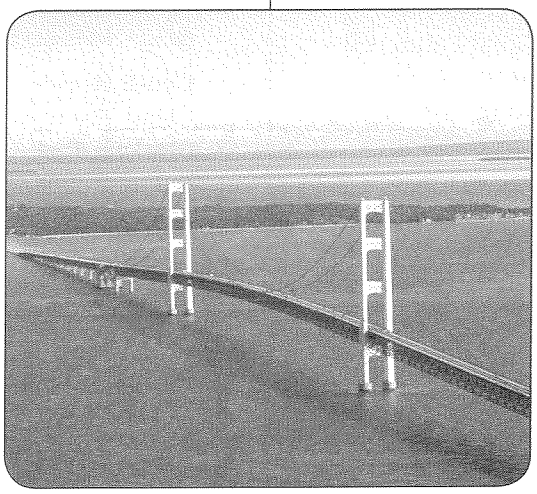
Restore the Great Lakes

Our Great Lakes have been badly damaged

Our Great Lakes ecosystem was not impaired overnight by one big, bad decision in our past. Rather, the damage was done by small measures and large, taken here and there. Some of the damage was done because we did not know better. Some happened even when we did know better. But all of it happened—and continues to happen today—because we did not make the health of the Great Lakes our bottom line.

So now, Michigan faces deteriorating water quality through industrial and municipal uses. We also have dammed rivers, drained wetlands, pillaged forests, over-developed coastlines, paved watersheds, and invasive exotic species. Airborne toxics and polluted waters impact our lives and health on a daily basis.

Michigan's economic losses alone are staggering. We have lost commercial fisheries like the lake trout. We spent billions of dollars to control exotic species, like sea lamprey, purple loosestrife, and zebra mussel. We have lost tourism dollars from closed, contaminated beaches. And we have already spent billions to clean up toxic hotspots and will need to spend billions more on dealing with this pollution.



Restoration is only meaningful in the context of stopping further environmental abuse.

We need national support to restore our Great Lakes

In 2003, bills to fund restoration were introduced in Congress. And in 2004, the President established a cabinet-level task force to address Great Lakes restoration. The media around the pending bills has fostered public interest in healing the Great Lakes. It has also stressed the need for complete, action-oriented plans.

Slowly, our country is realizing the value of its water resources. Recently, Congress appropriated $8 billion dollars to help restore the Florida Everglades. Similar to the Everglades, our Great Lakes have suffered from commerce, unplanned growth and pollution. And like the Everglades, there is a lot we can do to restore our Great Lakes heritage.

In December 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency created the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. Their plan is to bring together diverse partners and create good policy recommendations to help heal our Great Lakes. Over the next year, issue strategy teams will draft detailed proposals.

Restoration success will benefit Michigan's economy and health

Already, restoration efforts are underway in Michigan. These small, successful acts of healing our water, air, and land are making a difference. But we need more help. Michigan cannot do it alone.

But restoration is only meaningful in the context of stopping further environmental abuse. It makes no sense to continue discharging pollution in one place while trying to clean it up in another. Besides, research has shown that a clean and healthy environment actually attracts more businesses and workers. This knowledge has already caused a shift in the way some companies do business in Michigan, like Ford Motor Company at its successful Rouge River plant.

Nestled among these Great Lakes, Michigan has the most to gain by restoration. Success will bring us safe drinking water, vibrant wetlands full of game, healthy forests, swim-able beaches, clean rivers, and edible fish. This restoration recasts our role—from one of destroyer to one of healer. Our generation has a chance to leave the

continued

learn how you can help on the next page

Restore the Great Lakes

Lakes better than we found them. We can restore Michigan's role as a conservation leader.

How you can restore the Great Lakes:

1. Develop a complete, statewide restoration plan. Bring together state agencies, businesses, conservation and environmental groups to develop restoration priorities and create an action plan.
2. Secure federal funding for Great Lakes restoration efforts by increasing pressure on our Congressional delegation and by finding new ways for the state to support restoration.
3. Restore public land ecosystems by requiring state and federal agencies to review current management plans for their holdings. And through a collaborative process with public involvement, develop management plans that restore the ecological integrity of these lands.
4. Identify and remove constraints to restoration by modifying permitting costs and procedures.

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Healing the Bear River, Great Lakes restoration in action

The Bear River links 2 of Northern Michigan's most beloved water resources—Walloon Lake and Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay. It runs through the heart of Petoskey, a scenic lakeside town.

Like many "working rivers" that helped grow Michigan's economic power over the last 150 years, the Bear was used as a cheap dumping ground for industrial debris and household trash. Many erosion sites along the Bear River and its tributaries further degrade water quality and fish habitat. Changes to the watershed have also increased the amount of polluted stormwater runoff.

Healing the Bear is a community project started in 2000 by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation. Their goal was to restore the Bear River to its full potential as a recreation resource and ecological corridor.

Thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who were willing to get wet and dirty, the Bear River is flowing much cleaner.

Project participants have repaired the worst erosion sites and restored native plants along stream banks. They have also removed over 75 cubic yards of trash and debris, including old car bodies, canthooks, wagon wheels, tires, 55-gallon drums, pop bottles, and other plastic junk. Every year, more than 100 people come out to help clean up the Bear River.

Learn about other critical issues

By checking out **www.mecprotects.org**, you can learn more about achieving toxic-free communities, making wise investments, and protecting Michigan's heritage. On this website, you can find all the issues in this briefing book and learn more about other critical environmental and conservation issues, like the ones described below.

Achieving Toxic-free Communities

Phase out Unsafe Pesticides

Many of the chemicals used as pesticides can cause health problems in people and pets. Michigan needs to better track pesticide use in our neighborhoods, parks and schools. Lawmakers should phase out pesticides that cause health problems and promote the use of organic alternatives.

Prevent Pollution

Michigan companies produce over half a billion billion pounds of toxic chemicals each year. And each year, over 50 million pounds are discharged directly into our air and water. Our lawmakers need to focus more state resources on eliminating or limiting the use of toxic chemicals. This would help Michigan businesses reduce their costs, and reduce public health threats.

Making Wise Investments

Keep Sewage Out of Michigan's Waters

In Michigan, managing sewage is a huge challenge. Lakes, rivers and streams are fouled on a regular basis from sewage overflows, failed septic systems, and factory farms. The solution is easy: treat the waste before it flows into our waters.

Make Clean Cars

Michigan residents drive 100 billion miles a year. The associated tailpipe emissions contribute to air pollution and growing public health problems. Michigan needs to help its automakers shift production to new, cleaner vehicles. Clean cars will give us cleaner air, and help our businesses compete in tomorrow's global economy.

Provide Environmental Education

Michigan's natural resources drive much of its economy. Yet our state does a poor job of promoting sustainable practices. Michigan should provide environmental education to students, teachers, businesses, consumers, and government. Programs should teach about water quality, energy conservation, ecosystem balance, and outdoor recreation. By providing hands-on experience in a real world context, Michigan can foster better environmental stewardship.

Protecting Michigan's Heritage

Limit Billboards

Billboards are stacking up all over the state, distracting from Michigan's scenic beauty. Tourists do not come here to see billboards; they come to see our real Michigan. To protect Michigan's tourism industry, our lawmakers need to set reasonable limits on the growth of billboards.

Prevent Wildlife Disease

Michigan was slow to the address the onset of tuberculosis in northern Michigan's deer herds. Unfortunately, this led to restrictions on cattle operations in the area. Michigan needs to do better if it wants to prevent Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from affecting its deer. Our state needs to more closely monitor captive deer farming to insure Michigan's native deer population—and its hunting industry—remains healthy.

Find an environmental group near you

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself;
but each of us can work to change a small portion of events,
and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

– Robert F. Kennedy

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find more environmental groups on the next page

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"Through all these new, imaginative, and creative approaches to the problem of sharing our earth with other creatures there runs a constant theme, the awareness that we are dealing with life."

– Rachel Carson

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